

**Peter Chasseaud. *Mapping the First World War: The Great War Through Maps From 1914 to 1918*. London: Collins, 2013, in association with the Imperial War Museum. Index. Maps. Illustrations. Photographs. 304pp. ISBN 978-0007522200 (Hardback). Price £30.00.**

The importance of improving scientific mapping and targeting methods to facilitate more accurate artillery fire has been well established in modern histories of the First World War. Historian of military cartography, Peter Chasseaud's book provides an introduction on how surveying and mapping techniques were developed during the course of the war and how this was vital in making armed forces, especially the artillery, effective on the industrial battlefield. This book complements Chasseaud's other work on mapping during the First World War, which has up until now mainly focused on the Western Front. In this book Chasseaud covers all the main theatres of the war.

Containing over 150 contemporary maps, photographs and propaganda material, Chasseaud's book mainly uses archives found in the Imperial War Museum. The material included ranges from trench maps and barrage plans to geographical surveys and propaganda maps. In addition, the collection includes an ethnographic map of Europe, a detailed *Daily Mail* bird's eye map of the Western Front and a map of German aircraft routes during a raid on London in December 1917.

Technical details about the development of surveying and mapping are mainly included in the introductory chapter. Chasseaud describes how maps were created through the process of triangulation, and highlights the scale of the mapping challenge. There were no accurate large-scale maps of many parts of Europe, the Ottoman Empire, and Africa at the start of the war. However, the onset of trench warfare soon required armies to develop large-scale gridded maps.

Chasseaud's main argument is that it was aerial photography and photogrammetry that provided the 'great leap forward' in surveying and mapping, enabling unseen features and potential artillery targets behind enemy lines to be located (p.10). These, and other developments such as bearing pickets, were vital in the development of predicted artillery fire (fire without pre-registration), which increased the effectiveness of the Allied artillery. Here Chasseaud reflects the academically predominant 'revisionist' approach to the war, which emphasises how armies learned and developed as the war progressed. He places the development of surveying and mapping firmly at the centre of the First World War 'Revolution in Military Affairs' and describes how maps were a key part of the 'integrated modern weapons system' (p.72).

## REVIEWS

The rest of the book provides a narrative and overview of the war more suited to the general reader but Chasseaud continues to outline the role of surveying and mapping during the various campaigns throughout. Chasseaud also effectively integrates theatres other than the Western Front as well as the naval and air dimensions into his narrative. Most chapters cover the Western and Eastern Fronts in each year together, although attention is still usually focused more on the former than the latter.

Chasseaud does, at points in the book, briefly outline some of the war's historical controversies, such as the general factors that caused the war and also includes many up-to-date insights from recent works. For example, Chasseaud highlights the French contribution and tactical effectiveness on 1 July 1916, the first day of the Somme, reflecting the work of historians such as William Philpott (pp.179-180). However, the short section on Second Artois needs to be updated to include the French experimentation with the rolling barrage and infiltration tactics in the light of Jonathan Krause's research.

Chasseaud provides a sound modern introduction to the war and a useful explanation of how mapping and surveying facilitated developments in tactics and the 'learning curve'. *Mapping the First World War* ultimately serves as another reminder of the increasingly sophisticated and technical nature of Great War armed forces.

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